

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 /068 W

----- 102082

R 241009Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1272

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 14066

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, SP, GW

SUBJECT: BRANDT TO ATTEND PSOE CONGRESS

REF: MADRID 5953 (NOTAL)

IN THE ABSENCE OF WILLY BRANDT, WHO IS ALTERNATELY VACATIONING AND CAMPAIGNING, WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE QUESTIONS RAISED IN REFTEL WITH THE CHIEF OF THE SPD INTERNATIONAL STAFF, WHO GENERALLY REFLECTS BRANDT'S THINKING WITH REASONABLE ACCURACY AND WHO SAID:

-- BRANDT DOES NOT REPEAT NOT EXPECT TO MAKE MUCH OF A SPLASH AT THE OCTOBER PSOE CONGRESS ALTHOUGH HE REGARDS THE CONGRESS AS AN IMPORTANT EVENT. MANY LEADING SOCIALIST FIGURES ARE INVITED AND EXPECTED TO ATTEND, SO THAT BRANDT WILL NOT BE THE ONLY OR EVEN THE PRINCIPAL FOREIGN GUEST. BRANDT HAS NOT YET PREPARED HIS SPEECH, BUT AS OF NOW IS PLANNING TO SPEAK IN VERY GENERAL TERMS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PROGRESS TOWARD DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN. HE WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO OFFER TACTICAL ADVICE TO THE PSOE, ALTHOUGH HE WILL PRIVATELY AND PERHAPS PUBLICLY REITERATE THE SPD'S READINESS TO ASSIST.

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-- THE SPD DOES NOT QUESTION THE PSOE'S PARTICIPATION IN A UNITED LEFT DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION IN SPAIN. THIS OPPOSITION DIFFERS FROM MITTERAND'S COLLABORATION WITH THE PCF SINCE NOT ONLY COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS BUT ALSO LIBERAL AND OTHER OPPOSITION GROUPS ARE INCLUDED. IN FACT, THE PSOE WOULD NOT HAVE JOINED ANY GROUPING THAT INCLUDED ONLY ITSELF AND THE COMMUNISTS. APPARENTLY THIS OPPOSITION GROUPING DISTURBED THE THEN SPANISH GOVERNMENT: FRAGA CALLED THE SPD TWO NIGHTS BEFORE THE GROUPING WAS TO BE ANNOUNCED IN ORDER TO WARN THAT PSOE LEADERS WOULD BE ARRESTED IF THEY JOINED SUCH A GROUPING; FRAGA ASKED THE SPD TO USE ITS INFLUENCE IN ORDER TO PERSUADE THE PSOE TO STAY OUT OF THE NEW GROUPING. BRANDT WOULD NOT DO SO; HE MERELY PASSED ON FRAGA'S WARNING TO THE PSOE BUT DID NOT ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE ITS JUDGMENT.

--THE SPD HAS NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE STRENGTH OF THE PSOE. IT BELIEVES THAT THE PSOE HAS A MEMBERSHIP STRENGTH OF ABOUT 9 TO 10,000 AND COULD, IN A FREE ELECTION, WIN BETWEEN 12 AND 16 PER CENT OF THE SPANISH VOTE. THE SPD BELIEVES THAT ANY FREELY ELECTED GOVERNMENT IN SPAIN WOULD BE A CENTER-RIGHT GOVERNMENT AND THAT THE PSOE WILL HAVE TO SPEND MANY YEARS IN OPPOSITION. NONETHELESS, THE SPD BELIEVES THAT THE PSOE CAN BE AN IMPORTANT AND INFLUENTIAL OPPOSITION VOICE: FOR EXAMPLE, THE NIGHT BEFORE SUAREZ NAMED HIS GOVERNMENT, HE PERSONALLY CALLED FELIPE GONZALES AT HOME IN ORDER TO INFORM HIM OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

-- THE SPD REMAINS VERY ENCOURAGED BY DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL. IT IS NOW WORKING TO HELP IMPROVE THE PORTUGUESE ECONOMIC SITUATION: FOR EXAMPLE, THE SPD HELPED ARRANGE A VISIT BY GERMAN INDUSTRIALISTS TO MEET WITH SOARES IN PORTUGAL IN JANUARY AND A RETURN VISIT BY SOARES TO GERMANY FOR A MEETING WITH GERMAN INVESTORS ABOUT A MONTH AGO. SOARES USED THOSE MEETINGS TO INFORM THE GERMAN INDUSTRIALISTS THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD FOREIGN INVESTMENT.
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HILLENBRAND

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, MEETING DELEGATIONS, PARTY MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BONN14066
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760322-1198
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760827/aaaaawpp.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MADRID 5953
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 APR 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <23 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BRANDT TO ATTEND PEOE CONGRESS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, SP, GE, (BRANDT, WILLY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006